

MISCELLANEOUS.

DISCOVERY OF CLATHRUS CANCELLATUS IN BRITAIN.

SUCH readers of the 'Annals' as take an interest in cryptogamic plants will doubtless be glad to learn that *Clathrus cancellatus*, a genus and species new amongst British Fungi, has been discovered this autumn in the Isle of Wight, both by Mr. R. Kippist, Librarian to the Linnæan Society, and myself, quite independently of and unknown to one another, and in very different localities; Mr. Kippist having met with it close to this town (Ryde), and my plant occurring at the back of the island. I do not know the date of Mr. Kippist's finding the species here, but feel pretty certain it must have been anterior to my meeting with it, which was about the beginning of October, in a damp rocky and grassy hollow, just within and at the bottom of the Pelham woods by St. Lawrence, where it grew in tolerable plenty over an area of perhaps some seventy or eighty square yards or more of sward. My attention was involuntarily drawn to it by the excessively repulsive odour of carrion that pervaded the air around the spot, and which induced me to look about for the *Phallus impudicus*, a species well known to emit a scent so analogous to that of a dead animal, as to attract and apparently deceive the flies, and induce them to deposit their ova on the slimy pileus. The specimens of *Clathrus cancellatus* I found were many of them as large as an ordinary-sized orange, and presented the appearance of a very coarse or open network, forming slightly collapsed hollow spheres of a bright flesh-red precisely like raw meat, the vessels of which are still filled with blood; the texture externally cellular and I think laminated, emitting an odour which, unlike that of *Phallus impudicus*, was equally offensive, whether near to or removed from the organ of smell. This curious fungus was shown to me last year as something remarkable by a gardener on the grounds of — Walkingshaw, Esq., at Old Park near Niton, but in so decomposed a state as scarcely to exhibit its characteristic form; nor was I aware of the interesting addition made by Mr. Kippist and myself to the cryptogamic flora of this country till, being in London last week, and incidentally mentioning the circumstance of finding it to Mr. J. de C. Sowerby of the Botanic Garden, Regent's Park, I was made acquainted by that gentleman, and afterwards by Sir Wm. Hooker, with the fact of *Clathrus cancellatus* being unrecorded as a native of Britain, and indeed supposed exclusively indigenous to the more southern parts of Europe. It is probably not uncommon, at least in this island, where, as we have just seen, it occurs in three distinct localities, two of which are several miles asunder.

Ryde, Nov. 11, 1843.

WM. ARNOLD BROMFIELD, M.D.

LITHIC ACID IN LUCANUS CERVUS.

While engaged, during the past summer, in dissecting a male *Lucanus Cervus*, I found upon opening the intestine, that the cæcum, colon and rectum contained a dense greenish matter, of a soapy consistence, covering their internal surface, and which escaped slowly into the water, in which the specimen was immersed for examination, in the form of a thick cloud. Upon placing some of it under

the microscope, it was seen to consist of a great number of flat diamond-shaped crystals of different sizes, in the midst of which were interspersed some very small amorphous granules, collected together here and there in clusters, and exhibiting in many parts of the field a distinct molecular movement. My friend Dr. J. W. Griffith, who analysed this compound, assured me that its crystalline portion was composed of *lithic acid*; the amorphous part he believed to be *lithate of ammonia*, but its quantity was so small that he could not be positive—the former statement he is certain is correct. Bearing in mind that this substance was found in a part of the alimentary canal *posterior* to the insertion of the hepatic vessels, and that it is extremely improbable that it should have been secreted from the mucous lining of the intestine itself, there can be little doubt that it was discharged into the latter from the above tubes, and thus the fact becomes one of interest from its throwing light upon the much-disputed function of these organs. I regret at the time having omitted to examine also the contents of the tubes, but I am confirmed in my present view of their *uriniferous* office by the observations of other naturalists, among whom V. Audouin, in the fifth volume of the ‘Ann. des Sciences Nat.,’ has described two calculi as obstructing the biliary canals of a female “*Cerf-volant*,” and which, being treated by the usual chemical methods, were proved to be composed of uric acid. This writer does not, however, allude to the presence of its characteristic crystals. I would here take the opportunity of observing, that the analysis of the different secretions throughout the Articulated animals, and the Invertebrata generally, offers a wide field of research to those engaged in the study of organic chemistry.

1 Arthur Street, Gray's-Inn-road.

ALFRED TULK.

ALCHEMILLA CONJUNCTA AND A. FISSA.

At page 74 of the present volume of these ‘Annals,’ Mr. W. C. Trevelyan refers the *A. conjuncta* (Bab.) to *A. fissa* (Schumm.) on the authority of ‘Fl. Danica,’ pl. 2101. That plate is far from good, the silvery underside of the leaves being very imperfectly represented, but still it seems to be intended to represent *A. conjuncta*. So far so good. But if now we examine the synonyms quoted in ‘Fl. Dan.’ we shall find that they belong to a very different plant, which is so closely allied to *A. vulgaris* as to have been considered as a variety of that species by many botanists. Wimmer and Grabowski (‘Fl. Siles.’ i. 136) take particular care to distinguish it from *A. vulgaris*, and describe the leaves as “*reniformia circumscriptione orbiculari 7—9-loba, fissura ad folium medium pertinente lobis in folio complanato se vix tegentibus basi integerrimis quum in A. vulgari lobi ad basin usque serrati sint, inciso-dentatis . . . totis glabris margine tantum undique ciliatis.*” This is the work usually quoted as the authority for this plant; its authors quote Mertens and Koch, but not having that book at hand, I refer to Koch’s ‘Synopsis’ (ed. 2. p. 257), where the description belongs to the same plant and not to *A. conjuncta*. Koch and the ‘Fl. Dan.’ refer to *A. minor* (Tausch), published in his ‘Plantæ Selectæ;’ and the specimen contained in

that collection, which is now before me, is so similar to *A. vulgaris* (although I believe a distinct species), that most botanists would, upon a cursory inspection, refer it to that plant. It has not the most distant resemblance to *A. conjuncta* or *A. alpina*. The figure of *A. fissa* in Sturm's 'Deutsch. Fl.' 56. 12. represents the plant of Tausch, to which also correspond specimens named *A. fissa* by Reichenbach ('Fl. exsic.' 876) and by Shuttleworth. It is perhaps unnecessary to go further to convince my friend Mr. Trevelyan and the readers of the 'Annals,' that *A. fissa* (Schumm.) is not *A. conjuncta* (Bab.), although plate 2101 of 'Fl. Dan.' is probably intended to represent it. Should however more proof be required, it can be at once produced.

I may take this opportunity of stating, that during the late summer I examined Gatesgarth Pass, Cumberland, for this plant with great care, but totally without success.—CHARLES C. BABINGTON.

St. John's College, Cambridge, Oct. 28, 1843.

ASSUMPTION OF THE MALE PLUMAGE BY A FEMALE PARTRIDGE.

Powerstock Vicarage, Bridport, Dorset, Oct. 30, 1843.

Mr. Yarrell in his 'History of British Birds' mentions two instances of thirty-one eggs having been found in a partridge's nest, and observes, "there is little doubt in these cases that more than one bird had laid eggs in the same nest." It may not perhaps be deemed unworthy of record that a partridge this year laid thirty-six eggs in my aviary, out of which thirty young birds were hatched by two domestic hens. As the history of my birds is rather curious, I will venture to relate it.

Late in the autumn before last (1841) a young partridge, about three weeks old, was caught by a boy and turned into my aviary, in which I had then a young ring-dove that could not rise from the floor, as the feathers of one of its wings had been clipped. The young bird immediately sought the protection of the Cushat and nestled under her wing.

After moulting our bird appeared in the distinctive plumage of a male, with the rich chestnut-coloured horseshoe-shaped patch on the breast. Early in the following spring we were much pleased by hearing the call of our bird answered repeatedly from a field adjoining our garden. In a short time we observed a wild bird to visit the aviary every evening. We soon succeeded in capturing this stranger, as we discovered that it generally roosted among the ivy with which the building is partly covered. To our surprise our prisoner proved to be a male, and we were now at a loss to account for the perseverance with which it sought the society of our bird.

In the following moulting season (the autumn of 1842) our tame bird however lost its chestnut-coloured crescent and the triangular patch of naked red skin above the ear-coverts, and assumed the plumage of a female; the doubts which we now entertained as to the sex of our favourite were cleared up early in the spring when she began to scratch together materials for her rude nest, in which she continued to lay an egg daily for more than five weeks. She however showed no disposition to sit.

It seems that the circumstance of this female bird having been

for one season cut off from the society of the other sex was sufficient to cause a temporary assumption of a plumage resembling that of a male, and that as long as that disguise continued, although she was no longer debarred from sexual intercourse, the natural result did not follow at the first moult after the admission of the male. She appears in her proper colours and proves extraordinarily prolific, producing double the ordinary complement of eggs.

I conclude from the above fact, that the assumption by female birds of the plumage resembling that of the male does not (as is the opinion of many physiologists) depend upon a derangement of the generative organs.

GEORGE COOKSON.

SPIDERS DISCHARGED FROM THE EYE.

The 'American Journal of the Medical Sciences' for July 1843, p. 302, contains the following extraordinary relation, by A. Lopez, M.D., Mobile, Ala.

I was requested, Feb. 5, 1840, to visit a young lady, from whose mother I received the following statement:—The patient had left the city of Charleston to visit a friend in the country. On the night of the 29th of January, while conversing in bed, she was sensible that some object had fallen from the ceiling upon her cheek, just below the inferior lid. In the course of the night she was awakened by a feeling of intense pain in her left eye, which continued at intervals until morning, when the eye was discovered to be inflamed. Ordinary means were applied, and during the morning, feeling intense irritation, she rubbed the lids together upon the ball, and removed two fragments, which were readily recognised as the parts of a spider. Her alarm became very great, and was much heightened when the same thing was repeated in the afternoon. She returned to Charleston on the 2nd of February. When I paid my first visit on the 5th, the following was her condition: the right eye unaffected; the left turgid, inflamed and weeping; and there had been removed from it that morning a spider, imbedded in a mucous covering. It was entire, with the exception of two legs. The two preceding days before I had seen her, three others had been removed, and were now exhibited to me. I immediately submitted the eye to a close examination, without being enabled to discover the minutest portion of any foreign substance. I visited her daily until the 19th, and at every visit I removed either an entire or dismembered spider from the same eye. Between the 5th and 19th I invited, to an examination of the case, Professors Geddings and Dickson, and Doctors Bellinger and Wurdeman. Dr. Dickson, on one or two occasions, also removed these objects from the patient's eye. I made, assisted by Professor Geddings, the most minute scrutiny, with a view of discovering—first, whether there could possibly exist a nidus within the orbit for these animals; secondly, whether a sac containing their ova was there concealed; and thirdly, if any communication between the eye and the nose could account for their appearance. For these purposes the superior and inferior palpebræ were everted with great care, traversed thoroughly with a blunt probe, and afterwards I threw injections around the internal lining, but all to no avail. The anterior

and posterior nares were closely examined by strong light, both of the sun and candle, yet we could not perceive the slightest trace of any means by which either ova, insect or nidus could be retained.

The total number of spiders removed from the commencement was between forty and fifty. They were subjected to close microscopic examination by myself, assisted by several gentlemen accustomed to scientific investigations, among whom was the Rev. Dr. Bachman, whose reputation precludes all doubt, and we discovered at least three different species, distinguished by the anatomical classification of Latreille and Walckenaer.

[The entire account is copied in the 'Dublin Medical Journal,' from which we have given the above extract. Dr. Lopez refers to well-authenticated instances of pins and needles, worms and larvæ of insects discharged from various parts of the body. He comes, however, to the conclusion that in the case in question the spiders and fragments of spiders, were introduced from day to day by the patient herself, irresistibly impelled under the influence of a hallucination produced by hysteric monomania.]

METEOROLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS FOR OCTOBER 1843.

Chiswick.—October 1. Fine: clear: overcast. 2. Overcast: showery. 3, 4. Cloudy and mild. 5. Very fine. 6. Densely clouded: rain. 7. Cloudy: rain. 8. Boisterous: overcast. 9. Rain. 10. Clear: overcast: rain. 11. Boisterous: heavy rain. 12. Boisterous: rain. 13, 14. Clear: cloudy and fine. 15. Foggy: cloudy: frosty and foggy. 16. Frosty: clear and cold: frosty. 17. Stormy, with rain. 18. Cloudless: clear and frosty. 19. Frosty haze: clear: frosty. 20. Frosty haze: fine: cloudy. 21. Cloudy: showery: clear. 22. Cloudy and fine: stormy at night. 23. Clear: cloudy: clear. 24. Densely clouded. 25. Cloudy: clear. 26. Frosty: very fine: clear. 27. Very fine: boisterous, with rain at night. 28. Boisterous: clear and fine. 29. Hazy: clear: foggy. 30. Hazy: rain. 31. Heavy rain.—Mean temperature of the month $2\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ below the average.

Boston.—Oct. 1, 2. Cloudy: rain early A.M. 3. Fine. 4, 5. Cloudy. 6. Cloudy: rain P.M. 7. Fine. 8. Cloudy: rain early A.M. 9. Rain: rain early A.M.: rain A.M. 10. Fine. 11. Rain. 12. Rain and stormy. 13. Fine. 14. Windy: ice this morning. 15, 16. Fine. 17. Cloudy: rain early A.M.: stormy night, with rain. 18—20. Fine. 21. Cloudy: rain early A.M. 22. Cloudy: rain P.M. 23. Fine. 24. Fine: rain P.M. 25—27. Fine. 28. Stormy: rain early A.M. 29. Fine. 30. Cloudy: rain early A.M.: rain P.M. 31. Cloudy.

Sandwich Manse, Orkney.—Oct. 1. Showers. 2. Showers: clear. 3. Showers: large hail. 4. Rain. 5. Drizzle. 6. Rain: showers. 7. Bright: showers. 8, 9. Cloudy: clear. 10. Showers. 11. Frost: showers. 12. Showers: hail. 13. Large hail. 14. Bright: showers. 15, 16. Hail-showers. 17. Snow-showers clear frost. 18. Clear frost: showers. 19—21. Showers. 22. Clear frost: showers. 23. Showers. 24. Showers: sleet: showers. 25. Showers. 26. Showers: aurora. 27. Cloudy: rain. 28. Drizzle. 29. Showers. 30. Showers: fine. 31. Showers: fine: clear.

Applegarth Manse, Dumfries-shire.—Oct. 1. Cloudy: rain P.M. 2. Fine. 3. Dull. 4. Cold: dull. 5. Fine: mild. 6. Wet, but mild. 7. Rain. 8. Showers. 9. Clear: fair. 10. Dull: fair. 11. Wet. 12. Cold: snow on the hills. 13. Cold: hail-shower. 14, 15. Fine and clear. 16. Fine: dry. 17. Rain and sleet. 18. Fine: frosty. 19. Clear: fair. 20. Dull: wet P.M. 21. Clear and sunny. 22. Very wet: cleared P.M. 23. Boisterous: showers. 24. Wet. 25, 26. Fine: frost A.M. 27. Fine. 28. Fair: chill. 29. Heavy rain. 30. Fair: frost. 31. Wet: frost A.M.

Mean temperature of the month	43°·8
Mean temperature of October 1842	44 ·4
Mean temperature of spring-water	45 ·5
Mean temperature of ditto Oct. 1842	49 ·6

